

**Remarks/Arguments:**

**Preliminary Matters**

Claims 2 - 11 are pending, and claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. New claims 12 - 18 have been added, and it is submitted that these claims are allowable. Applicant contends that no new matter has been added.

The Abstract stands objected to as containing legal phraseology. Thus, the Abstract has been amended to provide clarity. Applicant contends that the Abstract, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 10 and 11 stand objected to due to an informality. Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to clarify the informality as suggested by the Examiner. Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 6, 8, and 9 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and rewritten in independent form. Claims 6, 8, and 9 have been rewritten accordingly, and are currently in condition for allowance. Applicant further notes with appreciation the indication that claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and rewritten in independent form. Claim 10 has been rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and Applicant respectfully submits that because claim 10, as amended, is dependent upon allowable claim 9, claim 10 should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim.

New claim 12 is dependent upon claim 8, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim.

New claim 13 is dependent upon claim 9, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim.

New claim 14 recites the *longitudinal grooves of variable depth* feature of claim 6, and therefore should also be allowed.

New claim 15 recites the *obliquely oriented transverse passages* feature of claim 8, and therefore should also be allowed.

New claim 16 recites features of claim 6 from a somewhat broader aspect, and therefore should also be allowed.

New claim 17 recites features of claim 8 from a somewhat broader aspect, and therefore should also be allowed.

New claim 18 recites features of claim 9 from a somewhat broader aspect, and therefore should also be allowed.

**35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claims 2 - 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 7 and 9 have been amended to clarify the claim language. Applicant contends that no new matter has been added. Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested.

**35 U.S.C. § 103**

Claims 2 - 5, 7, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 27 26 325 to Klink in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,924,864 to Logé et al. It is respectfully submitted, however, that the claims, as amended, are patentable over the art of record for the reasons set forth below.

As explained above, claims 6 and 8 - 10 are allowable. Claims 2 - 5, 7, and 11, as amended, are dependent upon claim 6, and therefore should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim.

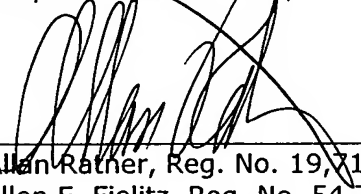
**Allowable Subject Matter**

As explained above, claims 6 and 8 - 10 are clearly allowable.

**Conclusion**

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, Applicant contends that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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AR/EEF/dhm

Attachment: Abstract

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Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004

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*Dennis Morgan*